

REMARKS

In the foregoing amendments, the preambles of claims 49 and 50 were amended to correspond to that of claim 40 from which they depend. The Official action objected to claims 49 and 50 because their preambles did not properly refer back to the claim from which they depended. Since the preambles of claims 49 and 50 were corrected in the foregoing amendments, applicant respectfully requests that the examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection to claims 49 and 50 that was set forth in the outstanding Office action.

Applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing amendments be entered under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(b) for the purposes of placing the application in condition for allowance or for the purposes of appeal. The foregoing amendments simply correct typographical errors in claims 49 and 50 and remove an objection to these claims that was set forth in the Official action, thereby reducing issues for appeal. Therefore, applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing amendments be entered under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(b) for the purposes of placing the application in condition for allowance or for the purposes of appeal.

Claims 40-52 are pending in the application at the present time. Claims 40-44 and 49-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 6,014,398 of Hofmann *et al.* (Hofmann).

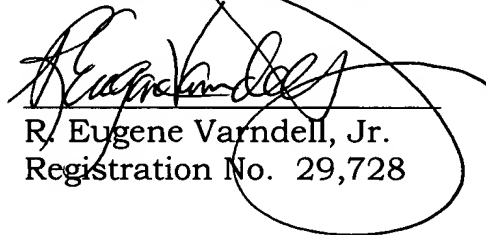
Applicant respectfully submits that the teachings of Hoffman do not disclose or suggest the presently claimed invention within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 102 or 35 U.S.C. § 103 for the reasons set forth in applicant's supplemental response filed on November 6, 2003. A response to the arguments set forth by applicant is set forth at the top of page 6 of the Official action. However, the arguments proffered at this portion of the Official action are statements of unsupported facts, together with conclusions of unexpected advantages and inherency allegedly within the teachings of Hoffman but in reality not supported therein. For these reasons, applicant respectfully requests that the examiner carefully reconsider the arguments set forth in applicant's supplemental response filed on November 6, 2003, and withdraw the rejection of applicant's claims over the teachings of Hoffman.

Claims 45-48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hofmann in view of U.S. patent No. 6,130,904 of Ishihara *et al.* (Ishihara). This rejection is set forth in section 6, which bridges pages 4 and 5 of the Official action. The teachings of Ishihara do not cure or rectify the deficiencies in the teachings of Hoffman. Therefore, applicant respectfully submits that the combination of the teachings of Hoffman and Ishihara do not disclose or suggest the invention is set forth in present claims 45-48 within the meaning of 35 U.S.C §103(a). For this reason, applicant respectfully requests that examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims over the teachings of Hoffman and Ishihara.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable consideration and allowance of claims 40-52 are respectfully requested. While it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, should the examiner have any comments or questions, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned be telephoned at the below-listed number to resolve any outstanding issues.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, applicant hereby petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fee therefor, as well as any other fees which may become due, may be charged to our deposit account No. 22-0256.

Respectfully submitted,
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